

THE
TESTIMONY OF TRUTH
TO
EXALTED MERIT:
OR,
A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE COUNTESS OF DERBY;
IN REFUTATION OF A FALSE AND SCANDALOUS LIBEL.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE COUNTESS OF DERBY.

THE world has been always extremely inquisitive after secret memoirs of such persons as have become eminently conspicuous in the public eye ; and this has been more particularly the case with regard to those who have arisen from the shade of obscurity, and from the humble walks of life, to the circle of fashionable splendour, and to the enviable distinctions of opulence and rank. Little minds consider their exaltation as an injury done to themselves ; and to gratify the malevolence of their nature, they will endeavour to render the object of their contemplation *odious* or *contemptible*. The first is usually the most grateful to the malignant disposition, and the latter is only had recourse to when all the art of calumny has been exhausted in vain to assail the reputation of distinguished virtue.

In this case, disappointed malice stoops to other artifices, and gleans every little circumstance, which, though far from being disgraceful in itself, may yet be placed in such a light, as, by contrast, shall excite a smile at the expence of the object of attack.

Former situations, domestic connections, and poverty of circumstances, will be sought into with a microscopic eye of observation, tortured into deformity, and exhibited in such colours, and with such a minuteness of detail, as cannot fail of attracting the notice of numerous spectators, many of whom, no doubt, will repay the performance with their approbation.

Still there are numbers who will treat this work of iniquity with virtuous indignation—honourable minds, who conceive, that an attempt to wound the feelings of another, by stating even facts to render him ridiculous, is in itself a species of horrid injustice ; and that the fabrication of scandalous memoirs of living persons of eminence, on the base of falsehood, is a species of murder.

To them the anonymous liar is a midnight assassin ; an enemy to society, who ought to be hunted from it, with as much zeal and assiduity as the prowling savage of the forest, that robs and

murders in darkness. When such a pestiferous being is abroad, every member of the community is interested, and in proportion to his depredations, should be the activity of the virtuous, in rescuing the character of the innocent from the fury of his malice.

To reprove the liar is a duty at all times incumbent on the lover of truth; and if the reputation of others is involved, his obligation becomes the more urgent. He is but a link in the great chain of social beings. If, therefore, he would have others enter into the vindication of his character, should it be attacked by any unprincipled libertine, he ought undoubtedly himself so to act, as to have a fair call upon them in the hour of need.

The following sheets owe their origin entirely to the influence of this principle. It is with pain the author perceives an illuminated age disgraced by a libellous spirit, and an anxious inquisitiveness after scandalous anecdotes. What can contribute to gratify the worst passions of man, is eagerly sought after, and received with applause. Paltry stories of eminent personages, tending to bring the virtue of their hearts, or the clearness of their understandings, into contempt, has a fair chance of a most extensive circulation.

Some men have the extraordinary merit of acquiring their livelihood by ministering to this vitiated taste. Adorned with all those depravities of disposition which they represent in the characters of those whom they delineate, it is not surprising, that their caricatures are strikingly drawn, because they are faithful representations of themselves, while they profess only to be the portraits of others.

One of these brilliant geniuses has gained a name, and no small portion of profit, by satirising the first, and best characters in the kingdom. He seems to live for no other purpose than to sport with the feelings of his fellow creatures ; to render scandal more pleasant, to prostitute fine talents to the basest of purposes, to be admired for his wit, and to be despised for his malignity.

Another, with more depravity, and less ingenuity, has made it his study to gather up, by wholesale, all the scandalous family anecdotes, all the falsehoods which jealous vice has invented to depreciate exalted virtue, and all the abominable misrepresentations of party prejudice, in order to please the corrupt palate of a degenerated people.

These are leading men in this honourable vocation. But their followers are numerous. Some are merely teasing, insignificant insects, who torment for a moment, and are soon extinct. Others rise into more consequence, according to the object upon whom they fasten ; and possess sting and venom which render them somewhat formidable.

It may be said that neglect will destroy the effect of their malice, and that by contempt they soon cease to be offensive.

Sometimes, however, it is necessary to crush the virulent beings in the midst of their ravages and their triumph, to prevent further mischief, and to render them examples to others.

On this consideration, an apology for the present performance, it is supposed, will readily be admitted ; for though the reputation of the exalted person to whom this tribute is offered can require no defence, the impudent assertion of a lying Slanderer ought to be refuted.

The biography of living characters is not, it must be confessed, one of the most proper branches of historical writing ; on the contrary, it seems to be a heterogeneous species of composition,

having neither utility or grace. We cannot expect to find it a faithful representation, even of circumstances, and certainly not of character and disposition. Partial friendship will throw failings into shade, and imperfections under the veil of general excellence ; while malignant ingenuity will distort the figure, to make it ridiculous, and expose and magnify every foible, to make the object odious.

But it so happens, that when such a false representation is given, a sort of necessity appears to lie upon those who are any way able to do it, of exhibiting a more natural picture, by way of counteracting the evil influence of the caricature.

The following is a rude sketch, in opposition to the wretched daubing of envious Ignorance. It is far from being a correct piece, for it has not been studied. It has been hurried by a feeble hand, under the guidance of a warm heart, indignantly glowing at the malevolence of a hireling Scribbler, and feelingly alive in the admiration of exalted merit.

The father of Lady DERBY was a native of the kingdom of Ireland, and served a regular apprenticeship to a Surgeon and Apothecary in the city of Cork, where he afterwards settled, and

practised with reputation. He was descended of a respectable, though not of an opulent family ; and both his education and profession, independent of his personal manners, infer that he was a gentleman by birth. He married, early in life, the daughter of Mr. Wright, an eminent Brewer at Liverpool, who lived on his own estate, but being too generous in his disposition, and keeping too hospitable a table, he greatly distressed his circumstances, and injured his family, which was not a small one.

Mrs. FARREN brought her husband little else than affection and prudence, with seven children, of whom two only are living : the present Countess of DERBY, who was the second child ; and Mrs. KNIGHT, of Covent Garden Theatre, who was the youngest.

Miss ELIZABETH FARREN was born in the year 1759, and lost her father while she was yet as it were but a child. The character of Mr. FARREN is recollected with gratitude by his family, and with esteem by his acquaintance, as a man of probity, urbanity, and pleasantness.

The reader of sensibility will enter feelingly into the situation of this afflicted family, thus deprived of their only earthly dependance. He will not contribute his smile of approbation to

the pen of Slander, which drops expressions of insulting triumph on the picture of domestic misery, which exposes the habitation of sorrow to the sneer of the scorner, the envious, and the proud.

It is not necessary that the truth should be disguised,—it is far from being dishonourable to any person of exalted rank, that though title and affluence now surround him, he or his ancestors once dwelt in a cottage. Innumerable are the instances which might be produced, of the most illustrious characters having issued from the most lowly and obscure situations. One shall be alledged as pertinent and amusing. It is of no less a man than SIXTUS the Fifth, Pope of Rome, who used to sport upon the meanness of his own origin in the most brilliant companies, saying punningly, that he was *domi natus illustri*, ‘born of an illustrious house,’ which he explained by describing his father’s cottage, through the roof and broken walls of which the solar rays had free access.

The distressful circumstances, therefore, in which Mr. FARREN left his family, are certainly far from being disgraceful to them ; but he covers himself with disgrace, who can sportfully notice and dilate upon the fact, with a view to wound the feelings of the survivors, or to render them ridiculous.

Wretchedly depraved must be the mind of that man who can dwell with pleasure upon the relation of domestic misfortunes ; but how much more deadly must be his malignity, who can ransack the sanctuary of the grave, to defile and render odious the habitation of the living !

Mr. FARREN had undoubtedly his failings as well as other men, but he is remembered not to have been the character which the licentious hand of the Hireling has described him. He was of a free and convivial disposition, it is true ; but he was not the beastly slave of his intemperance. In contradiction of the scandalous assertions of those who knew him not, it can be said by those who did, that though he had his imperfections, he was yet entitled to esteem for his many virtues.

The conduct of Mrs. FARREN and her children on this melancholy occasion was highly exemplary, and they manifested that patient resignation which results only from the deep-rooted principles of virtue.

The subject of our present notice now rises with a distinguishing splendour in a moral point of view, defying all the shades of

envious detraction, and forcibly attracting admiration by the purity of her light.

She felt herself under a necessity of looking to some line of life, not only for the support of herself, but for the assistance of those who were the most near to her heart ; and this she considerably did, at the early period of fourteen.

Being discovered to possess those powers of imitation which are so necessary for the representation of Nature on the Stage ; and these, added to the elegance of her figure, the melody of her voice, and the retentiveness of her memory, rendered her access to the Theatre easy, and her progress therein certain.

She made her first appearance in the year 1773, on the Liverpool Stage, in the character of *Rosetta*, in *Love in a Village* ; and her performance was such as to augur her future eminence in the line of life which she had chosen.

The dramatic corps into which she was enlisted, was as respectable an one as any out of London, and was then under the management of Mr. YOUNGER, a gentleman not more generally known and esteemed for his intimate acquaintance with theatri-

cal concerns, and the correctness of his judgment, than for the suavity of his manners, the generosity of his disposition, and the excellence of his heart.

He admitted Miss FARREN into his particular care, and undertook the culture of a mind, which he had the pleasure of seeing deserved his regard by its attention and sensibility.

When it is considered that motives of filial duty alone led her to this early trial of her abilities, where is the heart that will be backward in withholding the glowing sentiment of applause?

Let us here pause, and view this juvenile adventurer on the great theatre of the world, without the jealous eye of a parent's care and watchfulness, engaged in a line of life, certainly not the most unfavourable to the meretricious allurements of folly, possessed of attractions and powers, which could not but draw around her a croud of admirers, and possessed, moreover, of a temper naturally warm, and uncommonly vivacious.

The sensible mind, rigidly devoted to Virtue, and the least disposed to excuse any disobedience of her dictates, would tremble

at such an object, even though it were only created by the sportive hand of the novelist.

A deviation from the straight and narrow line of rectitude would not, in a person so circumstanced, have been considered otherwise, than as a matter almost unavoidable. Nor, in such a case, would any rigid portion of severity have been exercised by the candid mind, on viewing the slippery situation in which the object of its contemplation was placed.

She could not want for very curious observers, and to the present hour, there are those who would feel an exquisite pleasure, no doubt, in finding even but the most shadowy pretence of questioning the justice of her claim to an uniformity of virtuous conduct.

‘ The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unveil her beauty to the moon ;
Virtue itself ’scapes not calumnious strokes.’

SHAKSPERE.

How greatly then is she entitled to our respect, whose firmness of principle, and regularity of deportment, at an age, and in circumstances, so favourable to licentiousness, preserved her repu-

tation unsullied, and moved forward to honour with a steadiness of virtue almost unparalleled !

She continued to perform at Liverpool and other provincial theatres, particularly at Chester and Shrewsbury, always under the eye of her paternal friend Mr. YOUNGER, who treated her as a child of his own, and rendered the circumstances of her mother and sister PEGGY, now Mrs. KNIGHT, comfortable, though not abundant.

Miss FARREN was, indeed, a very great acquisition to him as Manager of a Theatre, for she was become an eminent favourite at every place where she performed, and drew crowded audiences.

Her range of characters was extensive, and was not confined to either province of the drama ; sometimes she figured as the stately heroine in Tragedy, and at others moved in her more natural sphere, as the favoured attendant of *Thalia*.

The manner in which she commenced her theatrical career, the companies with which she was connected, and the situation which she filled in them, were as respectable as an engagement out of London could possibly afford.

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A malignant Scribbler, however, copying from an incorrect compilation, has placed her in a strolling party, and that too of the most contemptible cast. He has described, in a very minute manner, the nature of an itinerant company; and his picture of their peregrinations from town to town may be amusing enough to those who are ignorant of the state of the drama in the country.

Miss FARREN neither made her *debut* in a strolling party, nor associated with one afterwards, although an ignorant and confident compiler, and a more impudent copyist, have placed her among the very lowest of this description.

We are under no sort of necessity of entering into a more particular refutation of bare-faced falsehood. Our information is perfectly correct, and we, therefore, have no scruple in boldly asserting that her original appearance was as we have stated, and her subsequent conduct and connections were not inferior in respectability to what distinguished her outset.

After gaining a first reputation at Liverpool and other places, and having profited by the counsels of her steadfast friend YOUNGER, he added to his generous concern for her interests, by recom-

mending her to try her strength before a London audience. The advice was that of a man renouncing the consideration of his own advantage for the benefit of a friend whom he valued.

He not only recommended his pupil to venture on the London Stage, but knowing the difficulty that attends an introduction there, he wrote in her behalf to the elder COLMAN, then Manager of the Hay-market Theatre. In the Summer of 1777 Miss FARREN came to the metropolis, and was immediately received by Mr. COLMAN with respectful attention. On the tenth of June she made her first appearance at the little Theatre, in the character of *Miss Hardcastle*, in Dr. GOLDSMITH's comedy of *She Stoops to Conquer*, and her reception was peculiarly flattering to a young person, who, though she had been in the profession for four years, could not but regard the decision of a London audience with the most awful respect.

EDWIN ventured the trial of his comic powers the same night, in the character of *Tony Lumpkin*, and it is rather remarkable, that the same period brought out Mr. HENDERSON on the same Stage. A similar trio of performers will seldom be seen together in the same place.

It may not be unpleasant to peruse the opinion of the Critics of the day on our young heroine's performance, and we have, therefore, thought proper to extract it.

‘ Miss FARREN's, being a first appearance on a London Stage, appeared the most leading figure in this groupe, and from that circumstance, is entitled to some indulgence from the critic pen. Her performance of *Miss Hardcastle*, though far short of Mrs BULKELEY, who was the original Bar-maid, would not have disgraced either of our Winter Theatres. Her person is genteel, and above the middle stature ; her countenance full of sensibility, and capable of expression ; her voice clear, but rather sharp, and not sufficiently varied. Her action not directly awkward ; and her delivery emphatic and distinct. When Miss FARREN learns to tread the Stage with more ease ; to modulate, and vary her voice ; to correct, inspirit, and regulate her action ; and to give a proper utterance to her feelings, by a suitable expression of voice and countenance ; in our opinion, she will be a most valuable acquisition to our London Theatres. We do not wish to be understood to say, that she does not possess a considerable share of merit, even in her present uncultivated state ; it is because we think she has genius, that we affirm she may be improved. Least, however,

Miss FARREN should imagine that all her defects arise from a country-stage education, and it follows of course, that the London Performers are recommended as models of imitation, we admonish her to study Nature, and while she is endeavouring to get rid of the wild, desultory, untutored, burlesque stile of a country company, not to run into the other extreme, by imitating the made-faces, buckram'd motions, constrained manners, and quaint delivery of the majority of the painted puppets at Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.'

This was rather severe language, but it had the basis of truth. The advice given to Miss FARREN was judicious, and the praise bestowed on her, the more valuable from its being mixed with just criticism on her manner of acting.

Mr. COLMAN was soon sensible of the valuable acquisition which his Theatre had obtained, and our heroine was stamped on the instant a strong favourite with the public. On the 30th of August following she performed the part of *Rasina*, in the comedy of the *Spanish Barber*, which was then brought forward for the first time, and, by her manner of playing, she greatly contributed to the success of the piece.

Having thus passed the severest ordeal of criticism with triumph, there remained no difficulty in procuring an engagement at one of the Winter Theatres ; and she accordingly accepted offers of a liberal nature from the Managers of the Covent-Garden Stage ; where she performed in Tragedy with the late Mr. DIGGES. Not long afterwards, she removed to Drury-Lane, where her establishment became permanent.

Though she performed sometimes in Comic characters, yet she was considered chiefly as an excellent Tragic Actress. Indeed, at that time, the public taste seemed decidedly against her assuming the lighter robe of the Comic Muse, which, however, was far more suited to her genius and disposition than the solemn garb of her sister.

The secession of Mrs. ABINGTON from Drury-Lane to Covent-Garden offered a favourable opportunity of restoring Miss FARRER to her proper province, and she soon astonished the town by her excellence in those characters, which were considered as beyond her powers.

One writer insinuates, that ' it is probable she would not have been raised to the great eminence which she attained at this pe-

riod, or, at least, that she would never have attracted so much public attention, had she not kindled a flame in the breast of the Hon. C. J. Fox.'

This sort of reasoning is extremely curious ; according to it, we are to believe that the opinion of this eminent orator was a decisive one with the public on all subjects, and that he led a party in the play-house as well as in the senate.

Our judgment is clear, that the town in such matters has always determined for itself ; and that whatever might be Mr. Fox's sentiments of Miss FARREN, or partiality for her, the public saw with their own eyes, and estimated her merits by their own observation, without any consideration of her admirers.

Much has been said of this gentleman's *penchant* for Miss FARREN. If it ever subsisted, it certainly was of short continuance, and that it was so, must undoubtedly be regarded as highly honourable to herself.

Mrs. ABINGTON's departure from Drury-Lane was exceedingly advantageous to our heroine, who profited by the occasion, in exerting the full stretch of her powers in performing the very same

round of characters in which that admired Actress was known to excel.

Nor did she exert herself in vain. The public were soon amply consoled for the loss of their favourite. Some did indeed observe her progress in the public opinion with envy ; and the Critics, who always find it proper to appreciate the merits of young candidates for public favour with some degree of censure, as an evidence of their own sagacity, were not sparing of their remarks on Miss FARREN's pretensions.

Of the sentiments of one of these sage gentlemen, we shall avail ourselves in this place, and it may not be unpleasant to our readers, now that she is forever removed from the spot where they so often beheld her with pleasure, to trace her theatrical character as given by the Critics of the period.

‘ The desertion of Mrs. ABINGTON from Drury-Lane to Covent-Garden Theatre left an open field for the display of Miss FARREN's abilities, of which the public had before entertained great hopes. The task, however, was a severe one, perhaps too severe. The manner of Mrs. ABINGTON is not only excellent in itself, but the auditors were so used to it, and remembered it so perfectly

in each instance, where the wit, satire, or situation was remarkable, that her successor must have been her superior, to have been thought her equal. Truth requires we should say, though Miss FARREN has great merit, she was neither. She is yet young, and from the progress she made during the first seasons of her appearance on the London Theatres, we have reason to hope, that if she pursues her endeavours to excell, with the same ardour she began, she will become the favourite of *Thalia*, and one of the brightest ornaments of the Stage. Her figuré is tall, but not sufficiently muscular ; were it a little more *embonpoint*, it would be one of the finest the Theatre can boast. Her eyes are lively, her face handsome, and very capable both of comic and sentimental expression. But she has lately fallen into an error in the use of these gifts, which, if she is ambitious of true praise, it is incumbent on her immediately to correct. She is too playful, too free in the management of her countenance, and frequently not only understands too soon, but more than is consistent with the character. In real life, if any gentleman is audacious enough to utter a double *entendre*, every lady of good sense is careful to give no intimation of knowing its indelicate meaning; but continues the conversation in its direct and innocent construction, thereby avoiding to give any indications of the coquet, the prude, or the

wanton. Our Poets, it is true, take too great liberties, and which, we are sorry to observe, our Actresses are more industrious to display than conceal. It is exceedingly painful to the rational part of an audience, when they see a young lady, who is to be the head of an honourable house, insinuate, that she understands more than is becoming of an amiable innocence to understand, and they frequently depart with no very favourable opinion either of the real or fictitious personage. If, therefore, by the nature of the dialogue, as is too often the case, an Actress is obliged to answer one indeliacy by another, she will be certain of giving more satisfaction by softening the colouring, than by making it more glaring.

‘ Miss FARREN has a clear and distinct articulation, but as her voice is not exceedingly powerful, it is necessary she should speak loud at present, and endeavour, by private exertions, to improve its tone for the future. She, like most other Performers, has been more successful in new plays than old. When young Performers have the happiness to obtain a good part in a play, where no comparisons can be made, if they have any talents, then is the time to display them. Few have the capability or the courage to attempt originality in old characters, in which the dress, the action, and

the manners have been established, and have received a sort of sanction by foregone success. Miss FARREN's performance in the *Chapter of Accidents* is charming, and the amiable sensibility she discovers in that play, makes us regret that Nature has not given her powers equal to her feelings, as she would then undoubtedly have been a delightful Tragic Actress.'

The part which first fixed her in the esteem of the public as a Comic Actress was *Lady Townly*, and her first performance of this character was at the strong recommendation of that judicious Performer, the late Mr. PARSONS, who conquered her scruples by repeated solicitations, and the most powerful arguments. She performed this part for his benefit, and the applause which she received justified his discernment.

From this time she was considered as the legitimate successor of Mrs. ABINGTON.

If she was happy at being a favourite with the town at large in her professional capacity, she was still more so in the elevated connections, to which the excellence of her moral character, and her elegant manners and accomplishments, served as the only introduction.

Among the principal of these were Lady DOROTHEA THOMSON and Lady CECILIA JOHNSON, by an intimacy with whom she attracted the particular attention of Lord DERBY.

This Nobleman is represented as having not only introduced Miss FARREN to those Ladies, and to others of his acquaintance, but also as having exerted himself in her behalf with the Managers of the Theatre. The reverse is the truth in both instances.

Miss FARREN could want no such patronage as his Lordship's at that time, for her importance to their interests was too sensibly felt by the Managers, to need any sort of recommendation whatsoever ; and it is a well-known fact, that she was admitted to the society of the above-named Ladies, and of many others equally elevated, before Lord DERBY's attentions became particular.

The friendship with which she was thus honoured, is the most flattering eulogium on the propriety of her conduct that could be formed ; for the fashionable world, whatever may be its folly, is not yet so absolutely sunk in the vortex of depravity, as to slight the appearance of decorum. And though persons of rank may associate with one of their own degree whose reputation is

yet not unsullied, yet they would not readily admit one of an inferior station to their circle, who stood in the same predicament.

She now moved in a sphere of elegance which could not but draw upon her considerable notice, much envy, and many keen observers, well disposed to discover any little foible, and to magnify it into deformity.

What is the utmost that penetrating malice has pretended to discern in the fair object of its malignant scrutiny?—Why, that she took an elegant house in the most fashionable quarter of the town, forgot her former poverty, and treated her old benefactors with ingratitude.

That she did take up her residence in the manner described is true enough, and what impropriety is there in that?

Had she, indeed, obtained such a situation by less honourable means than she did, the pen of the biographer might have been severe at her expence; but certainly an ample income, derived from an approving public, for talents exerted for their amusement, might fitly be enjoyed in a style of elegance suited to the occasion by which it was acquired. By her connections, and man-

ner of living, it ought to be observed that the public were not losers, as her performance thereby became more refined ; nor, to her honour be it spoken, were any persons sufferers by the splendour she adopted.

The charge of ingratitude is by far heavier than that of ostentation, but it proceeds from the same principle of envious malignity.

It is, however, the mere offspring of an evil imagination, for it is within the circle of general knowledge, that so far from losing sight of old connections and former friends, Miss FARREN did, in every ascending step of her life, rather endear herself to them. She has been accused of treating her old, and most valued Patron, YOUNGER, with disrespect—the contrary is the case. Mr. YOUNGER was never so reduced, as to render even the most ignorant upstart of Fortune's wheel ashamed of his company.

Every member of the dramatic corps, not only of that to which she particularly belonged, but of every other of respectability, knows full well, and will readily bear this testimony to Miss FARREN's merit, that she always conducted herself with affability towards them ; nor ever assumed that arrogance of part, which manifested a sense of superiority.

Had she been inclined, indeed, as is too often the case, to forget, in the season of prosperity, those who had been her friends in more cloudy days, she could have no reason to reckon Mr. YOUNGER in the number, as his circumstances and his connections always made him a becoming visitor, and we add, that he always was a welcome one of Miss FARREN.

It generally happens, we might safely say it always does so, that those who are cursed with an ungrateful heart, begin with manifesting the evil principle toward those who have a natural claim upon their affections.

Proud minds feel a sense of shame if their lineage has been mean, and to keep their origin from being known among their new associates, they rarely fail to turn their backs upon their own parents, or at least to remove them into a state of obscurity, that they may not sustain a disgrace by their connections being known.

Here, on the contrary, we can contemplate Miss FARREN with peculiar pleasure, kindly repaying all the attentions of her mother by the most dutiful respect, and, in every step that she takes

up the hill of Fortune, bearing her aged parent by the arm, and proud of the association. Mrs. FARREN resided with her daughter, and has been regarded always with the same marked attention by her, as if she had dignified her by family honours, or by extent of fortune.

This surely is more than sufficient to refute the charge of ingratitude, which has been so wantonly made against her by ignorant malevolence.

We turn now for ever from the reptiles who have endeavoured to sully the fair fame of one who is an honour to human nature, and will be held up, years after she is removed from this stage of envy and detraction, as an object of admiration, and an example to be imitated.

The affection of Lord DERBY for Miss FARREN was that of a mind strongly imbued with a sense of honour, and deeply sensible of the virtues of its object. The assiduity of his Lordship was flattering, and the circumstances in which he stood, with relation to his Countess, were such as by no means to render such an attachment indecorous.

Had that attachment, indeed, been persued to the too customary consequences of similar connections, the world would have been more disposed to find excuses, than to vent rigid censure upon the parties.

In the present case, we have no excuses to plead, but we have much to applaud.

MISS FARREN did not discountenance his Lordship's passion, and what female mind will judge harshly of her for not doing it? She, however, preserved the dignity of her sex, in a manner, and with a perseverance, that many may profess to admire, but few, perhaps, will be inclined to imitate.

It is an indisputed fact, that she never admitted his Lordship to any interview, unless Mrs. FARREN was present.

This intercourse subsisted for some years, and by this deportment, the flame which had been kindled in the Earl's mind was kept alive with unabating fervour.

In this place we shall take the liberty of laying before our readers the following elegant poetical testimonies to Miss FARREN'S

merit and accomplishments, and which, we have no doubt, came both from the same pen.

The first is certainly the most honourable of the two ; because it is an acknowledgment of Miss FARREN's piety. Here let detraction blush, and youth be instructed !

TO MISS FARREN,

ON HER BEING ABSENT FROM CHURCH.

‘ WHILE wond’ring Angels, as they look’d from high,
Observ’d thine Absence with an holy sigh,
To them a bright exalted Seraph said,
“ Blame not the conduct of the absent Maid !
“ Where e’er she goes, her steps can never stray,
“ RELIGION walks Companion of her way :
“ She goes with ev’ry virtuous thought imprest,
“ HEAV’N on her FACE, and HEAV’N within her BREAST.”

‘ THE BARD.’

The following lines were addressed to Mr. HUMPHREYS, the celebrated Miniature Painter, on his

PORTRAIT OF MISS FARREN.

‘ O THOU whose pencil all the Graces guide,
Whom Beauty, conscious of her fading bloom,
So oft implores, alas ! with harmless pride,
To snatch the transient treasure from the tomb.

‘ Pleas’d, I behold the Fair, whose comic art
Th’ unwearied eye of Taste and Judgment draws ;
Who charms with Nature’s elegance the heart,
And claims the loudest thunder of applause.

‘ Such, such alone should prompt thy pencil’s toil !
Of saving Folly give thy labour o’er ;
Fools never will be wanting to our Isle,
Perhaps a FARREN may appear no more.’

This attachment continued with mutual sentiment on both sides, and without any mark that could possibly give pleasure to the watchful eye of envious malignity.

So regular, indeed, was the conduct of the principal parties and so tired was the world of waiting for what it could not find, namely, solid food for scandal, that all suspicion seemed to be laid asleep, when the death of the Countess of DERBY opened again the anxious eye of public observation.

It was natural to expect, that a connection of so long a standing would soon terminate, after this event, in a Hymeneal union.

Some willingly supposed that this circumstance would not take place, and they endeavoured to find precedents whereon to ground this their generous sentiment.

The event, however, proved the fallacy of their sagacity in this instance, for the formally-announced declaration of Miss FARREN's departure from the Theatre, disappointed all their expectations.

On April 8, 1797, she appeared for the last time as a Performer, in the character of *Lady Teazle* in the *School for Scandal*; and the anxiety of the public to see the last of their favourite Actress was so great, that the Theatre was soon crowded after the doors opened. Towards the conclusion of the play, Miss FARREN appeared to

be much affected, and when Mr. WROUGHTON came forward to speak the lines hereafter quoted, her emotions increased to such a degree, that she was under the necessity of receiving support from Mr. KING. The fall of the curtain was attended with repeated bursts of applause, not unmingled with feelings of regret for the loss of such an Actress and such a Woman, now in the zenith of her charms, and while her dramatic reputation is higher than ever. The profession she has just quitted will acquire a respectability from her exaltation (such are the prejudices of the world) which no talents, however brilliant and extraordinary, could procure for it; but let it be said also, that the *character* of Miss FARREN, private as well as public, is the genuine source of this respectability; and that rank alone, unsupported by real worth, would serve to render it infamous rather than illustrious.

The Farewell Address, which some have attributed to Mr. SHERRIDAN, concluded thus :

‘ But ah ! this night adieu the mirthful mien,
When Mirth’s lov’d favourite quits the mimic scene !
Startled *Thalia* would assent refuse,
But Truth and Virtue sue’d, and won the Muse.
Aw’d by sensations it could ill express,
Tho’ mute the tongue, the bosom feels not less :

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE

Her *speech* your kind indulgence oft has known,
 Be to her *silence* now that kindness shewn;
 Ne'er from her mind th' endear'd record will part,
 But live the proudest feelings of a grateful heart.'

MISS FARREN'S last immediate characters were, March 30th, *Violante*—April 1st, *Maria* in the *Citizen*—3d, *Estifania*—4th, *Susan* in the *Follies of a Day*—6th, *Bisarre* in the *Inconstant*—and 8th, *Lady Teazle*.

Having thus dropped the curtain on her Theatrical career, nothing more remains than to announce her introduction to the world of rank.

On the 8th of May she was married to Lord DERBY by special licence, at his Lordship's house in Grosvenor square, and the new married couple set out immediately for the *Oaks*, his Lordship's seat, near *Epsom*.

Soon after this long-expected union had taken place, her Ladyship was introduced at Court, and made one of the procession at the nuptials of the PRINCESS ROYAL, with the Hereditary Prince of WIRTEMBERG, an additional subject of mortification to those who beheld her progress and elevation with a jaundiced eye.

We here close our view of the Countess of DERBY, leaving it to her own clear and undiminished lustre, to speak her future praise, in no degree doubting that the rectitude which has preserved her from incurring merited censure in situations the most critical and trying, will enable her to maintain the exalted station to which she has arrived, with a Honour equal to the Virtue which has procured it.

FINIS.

B L

